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FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6863
HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
INFO SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS LUSAKA 000216

AIDAC

STATE FOR AF AND AF/S
STATE PASS TO AID
AID/W/AFR/SA FOR MARJORIE COPSON; DCHA/OFDA FOR CCHAN,
ACONVERY, LPOWERS, TDENYSENKO, JBORNS, JDWORKIN, LPETERSEN
AND RGRANT
INFO AFR/SA JHARMON
DCHA/FFP USAID/SOUTHERN AFRICA FOR HHALE AND PDISKIN

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: INFO CABLE - ZAMBIA SITUATION REPORT Q FLOOD
DISASTER ALERT

¶1. SUMMARY: During the month of March 2009, many parts of Zambia have experienced high rainfall resulting in flooding, particularly in the Western and Northwestern provinces. According to Zambia's Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU), Shangombo district in Western province is the most affected with loss of human life, houses, field crops and access roads. The flooding displaced hundreds of people. In other districts, floods washed away roads and bridges, collapsed or submerged houses and damaged crops.
END SUMMARY

¶2. The Government of the Republic of Zambia's (GRZ) Current Efforts and Capacity: Through the DMMU, the GRZ is providing food and shelter to flood victims and repairing damaged bridges and roads to ease transport and communication. The GRZ has indicated that it has the capacity to provide food supplies and repair damaged infrastructure. It received adequate relief supplies last year from donors, including the United States. However, it may not have adequate funds for logistics.

¶3. Extent of Flood Damage: In Shangombo, the floods displaced an estimated 500 villagers. Reports cite a loss of food items, crops, and access roads. Authorities have recorded three flood-related deaths in Shangombo. The DMMU has indicated that displaced people will require shelter, food, and disinfectants to prevent any disease outbreaks. According to media reports, floods have affected several districts in Zambia, washing away roads and bridges, and submerging and damaging houses and field. As of the date of this cable, the GRZ has not declared a disaster, and it appears capable of addressing the situation. Post does not have a reliable indication of the extent of flood damage, except for Shangombo, where the DMMU conducted a rapid assessment. Post sees no indication that the GRZ will declare a disaster in the near future.

¶4. Health Concerns: Flooding has not resulted in a major increase of water-borne disease, but the risk of disease and water contamination remains high.

¶5. Monitoring of the situation: Post will continue to closely monitor the flood situation in Zambia. Post will work with the GRZ, Department of Water Affairs, Meteorological Department, and other relevant offices. Post will participate in any planned Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC) flood assessments and, as chair of the donor group for humanitarian assistance, coordinate the international response to any event.

¶6. Weather Outlook and Potential Effects of Floods: The Meteorological Department has indicated that Zambia will

continue to receive above normal rainfall through March. Potential effects of prolonged high rainfall may lead to an increased likelihood of wide spread flooding. Heavy rainfall will affect the crop which has already reached maturity stage and may adversely affect crop yields. As experienced in the past, flood-displaced wild animals become destructive to field crops.

17. Flood Preparedness: At the beginning of the rainy season, the Meteorological Department forecasted that Zambia would receive normal to above normal rains, resulting in floods in some areas. The DMMU issued alert information through electronic and print media on remedial measures. The GRZ developed a 2008/09 Contingency Plan for Floods. The plan articulates the government's response to floods, the roles to be performed by various stakeholders, and the anticipated budget.

18. The GRZ Appeal: The DMMU has indicated that it is able to respond to the disaster needs and at this point there is little likelihood that GRZ will declare a disaster.

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